Hokies' Best Overcomes Cavaliers 65-60

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RICHMOND — After looking sloppy in the first half, Virginia Tech put it together. The Hokies put it together better than they had in any game this year.

Tech played such a good second half Thursday night that the result was a 65-60 win over Virginia and the championship trophy in the Richmond Times-Dispatch Tournament.

"We were tremendous in the second half. That was the best we have played all year," said Tech Coach Charlie Moir. "Virginia played a super first half. We didn't really play that badly. We just took bad shots."

In the first half, the Hokies hit only 20 of 32 from the floor (62.5 percent). At the same time, the Cavaliers were hitting 62 percent. But UVa had only a 20-24 lead at halftime.

"We had too many turnovers, too many mistakes," said Virginia's Terry Holland. "We've got to handle the ball better. We had a stretch when we turned the ball over and turned it over, without getting a shot."

Virginia should have put the game away in the first half. Tech missed its first six shots. It took the Hokies more than five minutes to score their first field goal, but the Cavaliers couldn't take advantage. UVa had only a 6-1 lead.

But that was a lead Virginia didn't relinquish through the first half. The biggest it got was eight (20-12) and the smallest it got was one (23-22). But it was Virginia's lead through the first 20 minutes.

Virginia's front line was the reason for the Cavaliers' success. Marc Isavroni (9), Steve Castellani (8) and Ottis Fulton (6) were the men doing the scoring for UVa in the first half.

"Our front line played well," observed Holland. "But we didn't get much out of our backcourt. That's the reverse of the problem we've had this season."

But in the second half, Tech played tough defense and shut down the Cavaliers. "We felt that we forced Virginia to take the bad shots we had been taking in the first half," Moir claimed. "We played good defense."

"That defense made UVa shoot a poor 35 percent in the second half. The Cavaliers weren't getting the easy shots they got in the first 20 minutes. Virginia controlled the rebounding, 37-27, but it did no good."

Tech took the lead for the first time, 37-36, with 13 minutes left in the game. The Cavaliers went six minutes without a field goal. During that span, they went from three points up to five behind. It was Tech's game after that with Marshall Ashford, the tournament's most valuable player, leading Virginia offensively and defensively.

Ashford finished the game with 19 points, but he had two timely steals and four assists. He was the only player on either team to stay in the game for all 40 minutes.

"It was a tremendous effort by Marshall," noted Moir. "This was by far the best game he has played. I can't say enough about him. He contained Langloh. We didn't want Langloh to have a 20-point night."

UVa's Langloh had been instrumental in Wednesday's 85-58 win over VCU. He had seven points against the Hokies.

"Tech also got some help from freshman forward Wayne Robinson. Starter Duke Thorpe was on the floor when the game started, but he was bothered by a groin injury and foul problems. Thorpe wasn't expected to play.

"This morning, he worked out and wasn't able to do anything," Moir explained. But he loosened up with heat treatment. When he goes out of a game, I think our team tightens its belts."

"Robinson did a tremendous job on defense. He didn't score, but he helped the ball away a couple of times. He did a great job of guarding Iavaroni."

The loss drops the Cavaliers to 4-2.

"Obviously, I'm very disappointed with our loss," Holland commented. "We played well in spots, but we haven't put it together. I don't think we've played enough together yet."

But Tech feels it put it together in the second half. "Virginia played much better in the first half than in the second, but we had something to do with it," said Moir. "We played a tremendous half."

Virginia Tech 65
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